

Warlord Marines and Families,

2011 is off to a great start for VMFAT-501 with a safe return from the holidays and widespread accolades for the Marines who made this year's Toys-for-Tots campaign the best ever. Led by SSgt Willems, over (20) 501 Marines volunteered their time during the holidays for a Toys-for-Tots campaign that raised over five times the historical average in funds (~\$25,000). In addition, these Marines collected over 13,000 toys that helped bring Christmas to children all over the local area. This is a fine example of the outstanding Warlord contribution to the local community that will resonate for years to come.

It is also a good time to reflect on the historic work we have done during the past year and the exciting challenges that loom on the bow for 501. During the past 18 months we have worked diligently here at Eglin and in travel locations around the country to stand up the first Marine Corps F-35B squadron and prepare for the arrival of our first jets. Sometime later this year we can look forward to the first delivery of the F-35B to Eglin and your work has ensured that we will be fully prepared for that great moment. In the meantime we will move into our brand new hangar over the next few weeks, where we will welcome you all to our next "First Friday" event on February 4th!

Thank you again for all your continued efforts and dedication in support of VMFAT-501.

Semper Fidelis!
James B Wellons
Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer